

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN JAMES B. CAIN, UNITED STATES NAVY

James Bernice Cain was born in Charlottesville, Georgia, on April 23, 1920, son of John Robert and Mary (Jones) Cain, both now deceased. He attended Belmont Abbey, Belmont, North Carolina and Gardner Webb College, Boiling Springs, North Carolina, from which he received the degree of Associate of Arts. He enlisted in the U. S. Naval Reserve on April 12, 1941 and on June 13, that year, was appointed Aviation Cadet. He had flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, from April to October 1941, and on October 16, was commissioned Ensign, USNR. He subsequently advanced in rank, attaining that of Captain, to date from July 1, 1961, having transferred from the Naval Reserve to the Regular Navy on November 29, 1945.

Designated Naval Aviator in 1941, he was assigned as an Instructor at the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, until January 1944, after which he served for several months with Carrier Aircraft Service Unit TWENTY-THREE. In March 1944 he joined Fighting Squadron FORTY-FIVE and while serving with that squadron participated in the First and Second Battles of the Philippines; the First and Second Strikes on Tokyo; the Iwo Jima and Okinawa Campaigns; and operations in the South China Sea and at Formosa. With a total of eight Japanese planes shot down to his credit, he was top scorer of his air group. He flew more combat hours (350) and more combat sorties (107), than any other pilot in the squadron. He would attempt to destroy enemy planes by forcing them into the water and, in one case, chewed off the enemy's tail assembly with his Hellcat's propeller.

He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Gold Stars in lieu of the Second and Third Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Air Medal with Gold Stars in lieu of six additional awards and the Silver Star Medal. The citations follow in part:

Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...as a Division Leader in Fighting Squadron FORTY-FIVE, attached to the USS SAN JACINTO, in action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of French Indo-China on January 12, 1945. Participating in a coordinated strafing, rocket and torpedo attack on hostile shipping, (he) braved intense antiaircraft fire from Japanese Naval batteries to make repeated runs on three enemy warships, scoring two damaging rocket hits on a destroyer escort which was subsequently sunk..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Second Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...in action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of Tokyo, February 16, 1945. Flying high cover during a fighter sweep, (he) shot down two enemy fighter planes and skillfully assisted his wingman in shooting down a third, thereby contributing materially to the success of these vital missions..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Third Air Medal: "For meritorious service...during action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of Okinawa Gunto, March 19, 1945. Flying combat air patrol over a friendly Task Force, (he) shot down an enemy aircraft, thereby aiding in the protection of our forces from hostile airborne attack..."

Silver Star Medal: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity.... in action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of Okinawa Jima, April 6, 1945. Flying as advance combat air patrol and defending friendly surface forces and ground troops against attack from numerically superior enemy air forces, (he) personally destroyed three enemy planes in the air and assisted in the destruction of another. In addition, he directed the activities of his division of planes which shot down seven additional hostile planes and probably destroyed one other..."

Gold Star in lieu of the Fifth Air Medal: "For meritorious service as Pilot of a Carrier-Based Fighter Plane, during action against enemy Japanese forces in the vicinity of Okinawa Gunto, April 7, 1945. Flying combat air patrol in support of operations on Okinawa Jima, (he) shot down an enemy aircraft, thereby assisting materially in the protection of our forces from hostile airborne attack..."

The Air Medal with Gold Stars in lieu of the Second, Fourth, Sixth and Seventh Air Medals and the Gold Star in lieu of the Third Distinguished Flying Cross were awarded him for completing thirty missions during the period January 4, to April 15, 1945. He is also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the USS SAN JACINTO.

During May and June 1945 he served as a Team Leader with Fighting Squadron SIXTEEN, after which he had training until December of that year at the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Green Cove Springs, Florida. Following a brief assignment at the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, he reported in January 1946 as First Lieutenant on board the USS CUMBERLAND (AV-17). In May 1947 he joined Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-TWO and in July that year was detached for duty at the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Cecil Field, Jacksonville, where he remained until November 1948. He then became Officer in Charge of Fighter Advanced Training Unit ONE at the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Cabaniss Field, Corpus Christi, Texas.

He attended the Naval School, All Weather Flight, at the Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas, from December 1949 until January 1950, after which he was a student at the General Line School, Monterey, California. In December 1950 he joined Fighter Squadron SIXTY-TWO and in February 1951 transferred to Fighter Squadron ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-TWO to serve as Executive Officer and Navigator until June 1952, when he assumed command. For outstanding services while attached to that squadron, he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of the Fourth Distinguished Flying Cross and a Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V." The citations follow in part:

Gold Star in lieu of the Fourth Distinguished Flying Cross: "For heroism and extraordinary achievement...as Flight Leader in Fighter Squadron ONE SEVEN TWO, based on board the USS ESSEX, during operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea on October 9, 1951. Leading a flight of jets on a pre-dawn reconnaissance mission, Lieutenant Commander Cain carried out damaging attacks against a moving, armed supply train in the face of intense enemy antiaircraft fire, scoring a direct bomb hit on the track and preventing the train from entering the sanctuary of a tunnel. Skillfully coordinating repeated bombing and strafing attacks, he silenced the hostile gun positions and seriously damaged three locomotives and many cars of the train. By his expert airmanship, courage and unswerving devotion to duty, (he) contributed materially to the success of his squadron in inflicting extensive damage upon the enemy..."

Navy Commendation Medal: "For meritorious achievement...as Pilot of a jet fighter aircraft while attached to and serving with Fighting Squadron ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-TWO...during attacks on North Korean and Chinese Communist forces in the vicinity of Songjin on March 4, 1952. Lieutenant Commander Cain led his division on a rail-cutting/armed reconnaissance flight in the vicinity of Songjin. After scoring six direct hits out of eight bombs dropped on the rail line, he discovered six trucks parked in a revetted area. Ignoring intense and accurate enemy aircraft fire, he executed repeated strafing attacks until all the trucks were destroyed. Despite heavy automatic weapons fire, he strafed and set fire to a large group of enemy vehicles travelling south towards the front-line area. Lieutenant Commander Cain concluded this outstanding mission by sinking a large Korean sampan underway south of Songjin..."

He was also awarded Gold Stars in lieu of the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Air Medals for completing sixty missions against enemy aggressor forces in Korea during the period August 23, 1951 until February 25, 1952. He is also entitled to the Ribbon for, and a facsimile of the Navy Unit Commendation awarded the USS ESSEX.

During the period August 1954 until January 1955 he was a student at the Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia, after which he had duty as Officer in Charge of the Jet Transitional Training Unit at the Naval Air Station, Olathe, Kansas. He remained there until April 1957, then served as Maintenance and Project Officer of Air Development Squadron THREE. In May 1958 he joined the Staff of Commander Air Group FOUR and from December 1959 until February 1960 was a student at the Naval Combat Information Center School, Naval Air Station, Glynco, Georgia. He next joined the USS WASP (CVS-18) as Operations Officer.

In July 1960 he reported for instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, and in June 1961 was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., where he headed the Air Traffic Control and Air Navigational Aide Branch until

January 1963. He then became Administrative Assistant and Aide to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations (Air). In February 1964 he assumed command of the USS REGULUS (AF-57) and in June 1965 transferred to command of the USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10). In April 1966 he was designated Chief of Staff and Aide to Commander Carrier Division THREE.

In addition to the Silver Star Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross with three Gold Stars, the Air Medal with nine Gold Stars, the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V," the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon and the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, Captain Cain has the American Defense Service Medal; American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; National Defense Service Medal; Korean Service Medal; United Nations Service Medal and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon. He also has the Korean Presidential Unit Citation Badge.